



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

The candle burns low

There were two news items which made the headlines in the United Kingdom recently and which are indicators of the spiritual and moral downward spiral of the nation.

God, in His mercy, through the labours of men such as William Tyndale, the translator of the first English Bible, caused the light of His holy Word to shine brightly in our nation, more brightly than in many other nations. It was William Tyndale who said to a blaspheming, ignorant popish priest: "If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause the boy that drives the plough to know more of the scriptures than you!"



William Tyndale, 1494–1536

God was pleased to do that and within a short time the English speaking world was favoured with faithful translations of the Holy Scriptures.

The result of this was immeasurable!

The knowledge of God and eternal things which sprang from the distribution of the Holy Scriptures permeated the nation and its social and legislative structures. God's Word left its mark on the behaviour of the people as well as moulding the laws passed by parliament. This was especially the case in the wake of the ministries of men such as George Whitefield. Under the power of the Holy Spirit the gospel of Christ, so encapsulated by the wonderful statement of the Lord Jesus in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16, KJV, brought the nation into greater and purer light and influenced its behaviour and manners in an inestimable fashion.

The United Kingdom became the centre of spiritual and social reform, and the fountain of gospel knowledge and evangelism far and wide.

This all came at a terrible price. An uncounted army of faithful souls suffered reproaches, deprivations, physical hardships and even horrible deaths in order to advance the cause of truth amongst their fellows. Nothing sums up the holy ambitions of such an army of confessors and martyrs than do the words of Bishop Hugh Latimer (1487 - 1555) spoken to his companion in suffering and fellow bishop, Nicholas Ridley, as they stood amidst the martyrs' fire in Oxford at the height of the Marian persecutions: "Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

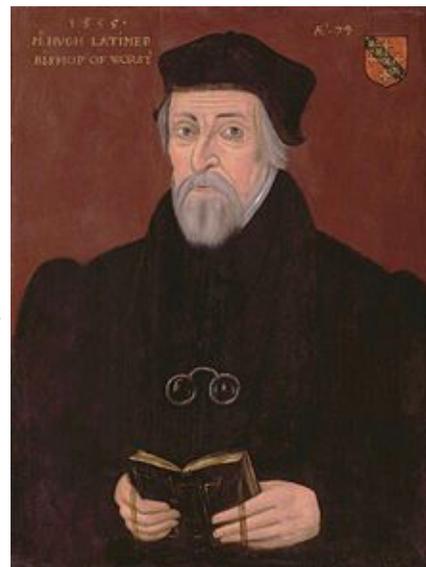
The light of the gospel has indeed shone across the land since those days of heroic struggle, but I fear there is a very great and rapidly increasing dimming of it in the last 50 years.

This is signalled every day in the record of men's deeds and words recorded in the news media. Nothing more so than the items we wish to highlight.

"More than half of England's schools are failing pupils on religious education, the schools' watchdog Ofsted has said."

So claimed a headline on the BBC news site in recent days (October 6th, 2013).

It must be noted that when we speak of 'religious education' in the State school system, we are not talking about instruction based upon the Word of God. God's Word plays little or no real part in such instruction.



Hugh Latimer, 1487 - 1555



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Rather, it is a man-made hodge-podge of humanism, multi-cultural philosophy, promotion of ungodly social ideals and atheistic nonsense!

But even what little of the Bible is mixed in with this devilish brew is being undermined by the growing indifference to the teaching of the subject being complained of by the schools' watchdog, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.)

The report highlights low standards, weak teaching, weak examination provision and confusion about the purpose of RE. In truth, there is just no interest in promoting even the weak and emaciated references to the true God found in the State school RE syllabus. Teachers in State schools are overwhelmingly unconverted and antagonistic toward the truth of God. How can there be anything other than a decimating of the knowledge of God, left over from the days of blessing and revival in our nation's history?

Sadly, all too many believers are apparently content to send their children to state schools where they are taught the devil's lie and influenced by the deceptions of the age. Little or no effort is being made by the majority of Bible-believing Christians to provide a proper education for their children as the law permits them to do, or even when such facilities are available through the labours of others within easy reach of them. That in itself is indicative of the decline in the spiritual zeal manifest amongst the people of God in the nation and which has greatly contributed to the rejection of the gospel manifested throughout the land.

Truly, the candle burns low!

Further evidence of the United Kingdom turning its back upon God and His Word was seen in another news item of the same period. Its headlines read: **Bible oath could be scrapped from courts - Swearing on the bible may be banned from court rooms under new proposals**, (6th October 2013.)

The article reads in part: "Magistrates will debate scrapping the religious oath for witnesses and defendants, but critics have raised fears the move could further erode the Christian heritage of Britain. Instead, all those giving evidence in court would make a secular pledge which it is thought would make it fairer and more relevant for people to help them understand the importance of what they are saying.

The proposals are to be debated this month by the Magistrates' Association, and if agreed will be put forward to the Ministry of Justice. Ian Abrahams, a magistrate from Bristol, said he had often seen people shrug their shoulders when presented with the religious oath, not caring that they are being asked to swear on the bible."

Here is evidence of the decline in the knowledge of God and reverence for His Word.

The failure to teach the truth of God, which is the primary function of the pulpit, has resulted in this disdain for the Lord and His Holy Word in the everyday affairs of the nation. When the pulpit abandons God's truth, as has been the unchallengeable case in our nation which is now given over to the ecumenical, popish and devil-inspired gospel of 'syncretism', then the foundations of good order and the fabric of morality will inevitably disintegrate. The classroom, following the example of the pulpit, dismisses God's Word and so too does the courtroom.

Such events can but herald the spread of damnable darkness in the nation.

- "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple," Psalm 119:130, KJV.
- "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," Psalm 119:105, KJV.
- "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life," Proverbs 6:23, KJV.

These verses highlight the fruit, the harvest of the sowing of God's Word amongst men. When that sowing ceases, when sowing of the seed of error and lies replaces it, then it is easily seen what the result will be.



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Light is replaced by darkness; understanding by ignorance; the unlit path results in the stumbling of the nation down the darkened road of folly and the blinded wanderings of a people bereft of law and instruction.

We can see this in the corruption amongst politicians and the business fraternity daily reported in our news; the utter breakdown of family life as is illustrated by the demise of marriage and the stable home, the consequent tragedy of abused, murdered children; above all in the futile and foolish remedies proposed by our legislators and moral guardians. Sodomy and sodomite marriage are legalised as is adoption of children by sodomites. The condemnations uttered by God against such abominations are outlawed and those who dare repeat what the Lord has decreed prosecuted. It is as the Saviour said it would be. "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," Luke 17:28-30, KJV. The utter rejection of God's truth took place amidst the continuance of the everyday activities of the nation. The vilest corruption was embraced as normal practice. Only the believer, Lot, was troubled by these events and that not nearly enough! He was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," 2 Peter 2:7, KJV. There are few today "vexed" with what is taking place in the nation. Here in Northern Ireland, we have professing Christians and indeed Free Presbyterians who are involved in the governing of our land in company with unrepentant murderers and terrorists in a government which has provided financial aid and support to sodomites for the promotion of their lifestyle.

Such is the sad and frightening picture of modern Britain once blessed by the burning, shining light of the gospel!

(By Rev Ivan Foster, October 8th 2013)